

Singing God's praise in a revised way

By Heather Reid

First of three parts

SOON CATHOLIC PARISHES IN Canada will be implementing both a revised *General Instruction of the Roman Missal (GIRM)* and a revised *Roman Missal*. This implementa-

tion will have ramifications for all celebrating Catholics, especially for presiders at Mass. In these three articles we will consider how the revised GIRM will concern and help music ministers.

The *Roman Missal*, which we have called the *Sacramentary* for the past forty years, is the large red book which contains all the prayers and texts for celebrating Mass. It is most often found on the altar and, during



Geoffrey Angeles is a priest of the Archdiocese of Winnipeg and currently serves the parishes of Sacred Heart (Virden), St. Jean (Grand-Clairiere), and Immaculate Conception (Rivers) as Pastor. Music has always played an integral role in his life and he is known for his musical accomplishments as pianist, conductor, composer and arranger. Currently, he sits on the National Council for Liturgical Music and is doing graduate studies in music and liturgy at the University of Notre Dame in Indiana.



John Dawson is Program Coordinator and Music Director, Office of Catholic Youth, Archdiocese of Toronto, and a member of the National Council of Liturgical Music.



After graduating from Concordia University with a degree in Psychology, **Michel Guimont** continued his education with a Bachelor's and then a Master's degree in Music (Composition), both from the University of Montreal. He is an accomplished composer who has published two complete Psalm Collections (GIA Publications Inc.) and other sacred works. Since 1991, Michel has been the Director of Music at Notre Dame Cathedral Basilica in Ottawa, where he has developed the music program from a single choir to the present five choirs and heads a music program that is considered to have one of the best cathedral choirs in Canada. Michel was appointed the Music Director of the University of Ottawa Choir in September 2010.

Mass, is used only by the presiding priest or concelebrants.

The *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* is the book of instructions that tells us how to celebrate the Eucharistic liturgy. It is found at the front of the Missal and is also often published as a separate volume. It directs, not only the presiding priest, but also all other ministers, including the assembly. The last General Instruction was released in 1970 with the first edition of the Roman Missal after Vatican II.

This newly revised General Instruction, often referred to as the GIRM, gives us an opportunity to implement what hasn't yet been implemented from the 1970 GIRM (imagine!) and also asks us to do some things differently. Music ministers will be delighted by its emphasis on the importance of music and singing by the assembly: "... great importance should be attached to the use of singing in the celebration of the Mass, with due consideration for the character of the people and the abilities of each liturgical assembly. Although it is not always necessary (e.g., in weekday Masses) to sing all the texts that are of themselves meant to be sung, every care must be taken that singing by the ministers and the people is not absent in celebrations that occur on Sundays and on Holy Days of Obligation" (40).

The projected date for the implementation of the new translation and the GIRM, as of this writing, is Advent 2011. This date would coincide with implementation of the new translation in the USA, and reflects Rome's request that our countries begin using the revised GIRM and Missal at the same time.

In Canada, the National Office of Liturgy (NLO) of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops is preparing resource materials to help dioceses and parishes implement both the GIRM and the Missal. For music ministers, one of the most helpful CCCB resources will be *Celebrate in Song*. This resource should be available by the time you are reading this article. It contains the new Mass settings that reflect the changes in the sung texts of the Mass, as well as forty songs/hymns meant to supplement those in *Catholic Book of Worship III*. *Celebrate in Song* contains many more communion procession songs and Lenten selections. Many communities will already be familiar with some of these selections; others will find them welcome new repertoire.

Celebrate in Song introduces three new Canadian Mass settings by Michel Guimont, Geoffrey Angeles and John Dawson. What is a Mass setting? A Mass setting includes the music for the sung texts or acclamations for the Eucharistic prayer (Holy, Holy or Sanctus,

Memorial Acclamation and Great Amen). The eucharistic prayer, although voiced by the priest in our name, is the prayer of the gathered assembly and requires everyone's active participation. A significant phrase in the revised GIRM is "which the whole congregation, joining with the heavenly hosts, sings" (79B). Participation is not just "spiritual." The GIRM calls for singing by all, not just a choir.

Each acclamation text is unique, but the melodies are composed in the same key and have a similar rhythmic structure so that they form a unity. Thus they can be one means of contributing to the entire unity of a Eucharistic prayer. A setting usually includes a Gloria and Kyrie (Lord, have mercy). Sometimes it includes an Agnus Dei (Lamb of God) and a gospel acclamation. This fosters a different practice than was often the habit after Vatican II, when we picked one acclamation from one setting, and another acclamation or sung part of the Mass from a different setting with a different key and or time signature.

Choosing a Mass setting for your parish community involves many considerations. What are your musical resources? Instrumental resources? Choir(s)? Does the community sing well and regularly at Mass? How many music ministers must be consulted and co-ordinated when choosing a setting? Although a parish may celebrate several Masses on a weekend, it is still one worshipping community so the same Mass setting should be used at all Masses if at all possible. That means that the setting must be easily accompanied by keyboard (organ and/or piano) and other instruments (guitars, etc).

It takes a parish community a long time (at least a year) to really learn a Mass setting so that the acclamations can be remembered and sung from the heart. When a community can sing the acclamations easily, then and only then is it time to teach them another setting.

Using a different Mass setting is one way that music ministers can acknowledge the change in liturgical seasons. At my own parish, we now know four Mass settings that we can use to highlight the different liturgical seasons. Another way to mark liturgical seasons is to use a different or no accompaniment for your Mass setting. Some communities sing the acclamations unaccompanied during Lent, and then add new instruments to the same setting to highlight the festive Easter season. One setting could be used during Advent and a different one for the Christmas season, or the same setting could be used to tie together Advent and Christmas, but changed to mark the transition to Ordinary Time. Changing the setting weekly usually confuses the assembly; rather

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than singing their rightful parts, they remain silent and listen to the choir. This is completely contrary to what Vatican II asked of us and to what the revised GIRM reiterates (79B).

Another practice adopted after Vatican II was the use of four hymns—at the beginning, preparation of gifts, communion, and end of Mass. Often dubbed the “four-hymn syndrome,” its intention was good: to have the people sing in English where previously music had been in Latin, often sung by the choir alone. However, the four-hymn syndrome neglected the most important people’s parts, the Eucharistic prayer acclamations, gospel acclamation and the communion processional hymn. The revised GIRM reiterates the importance of the assembly singing its rightful parts of the eucharistic liturgy.

The *Companion to Catholic Book of Worship: Guidelines for Liturgical Music* (CCCB, 2006), a very helpful Canadian resource, will continue to be useful for music ministers who need to know liturgical principles when they choose music for their Sunday gatherings. This resource in-

cludes the instructions outlined in the GIRM as well as other pertinent information to help understand them. It repeats what the GIRM suggests for the singing of the acclamations of the Eucharistic prayer: “Throughout the Eucharistic prayer there are three principal acclamations by which the entire assembly is drawn into the proclamation: the Sanctus

be sung by the choir alone” (*Companion to the CBW III*, 57).

Music ministers will be able to use *Celebrate in Song* ahead of the November 2011 GIRM/Missal implementation date to choose, learn and teach their parish a Mass setting, including the Gloria, so that by Advent 2011 the assembly will be ready for the new texts. When

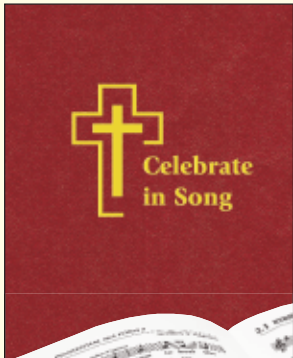
Celebrate in Song is released, the CCCB Episcopal Commission for Liturgy will outline a suggested timeline for its use. The songs in the resource may of course be used immediately.

What is new for the music minister’s consideration in the revised GIRM? A renewed emphasis on the role of the assembly in the celebration of Mass; a strong emphasis on the use of silence in the liturgy; a reiteration of the important unity of the

Communion rite and the choice of music for this and other processions within the liturgy. Every community will be learning new settings of the Gloria because the text has significantly changed. We will look at these changes and their implications for music ministers in the next two articles. Stay tuned! †


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(Holy Holy), the Memorial Acclamation, and the Great Amen ... On Sundays and solemnities, these acclamations should always be sung, even when no instrumental support is available. The acclamations are intended to be sung by the entire assembly; therefore they should never



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